

GOLD!

Nr. 21 - December 2023

Magazine van de Vereniging Gouden-Kruisdragers Vierdaagse

In this edition:

- Reunion in Buren
- Lustrumrewards: Did you know....?
- Portrait of two Gold Medallists: father & son





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GOUD! is an issue of the Association of Gold Medallists

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The Association of Gold Medallists is founded on 24 July 1951 and approved by royal decree d.d. 24 July 1952, no. 46
Cover photo: Jaimy Pieterse

Foreword chair

Dear fellow Gold Cross members,

In an eventful year in which the world around us seems to be ablaze, we have enjoyed the solidarity and good-fellowship of the biggest multiple-day walking event in the world, the Nijmegen 4Day Marches. From the 4Day church service, via our meeting points along the route to a (for some rain-drenched) entry of the Via Gladiola, we all celebrated binding people together through walking.

At other moments, too, our association brought Gold Medallists together, as for example during “Powered by GKD” walks and our reunion in Ruurlo and Buren. Hopefully, you will also have the opportunity to walk our Gold Medallists’ Trail to relive the memories of the 4Day Marches. Not only were we able to offer you our jubilee trail, but also the official opening of it was a good advertisement for our association in the media. This strategy was continued during the Marches, where we were given a prominent place by the media on the Wedren and on the association’s social media.

A considerable number of new Gold medallists put down their names after the Marches, and with that, the lean years in which we mainly lost members are finally left behind. However, the year was not merely successful, because the new policy of the Royal Dutch Walkers’ Association (KWbN) led to lots of cancellations, not only among members of the KWbN, but also in some cases of our members. The KWbN have difficulties to hold on to walking-clubs and walkers, which we consider an alarming development. Yet, the magic word here, too, is “togetherness”, since within both the association and the board of members we try and be positively critical of all new initiatives by the KWbN.

For now, I wish you a fine conclusion of the year 2023 and happy holidays. Hopefully, you can celebrate those with the people you love. Next year we, as association, will be ready to organize beautiful events and join you all on our way to the 106th 4Day Marches.

Frans Leijtens
Chair



News ** News ** News ** News

A new board and a renewed spirit at the KWbN?

The Royal Walking Union Netherlands (KWbN) has gone through a huge change since 2016. The union was build on a number of regions that represent their member organisations (walkingclubs). The number of individual memberships, direct member of the union, has been growing ever since. The union was in search of a new revenue model, that raises income with commercial activities through the use of social media, partnerships and other initiatives. The union not only had members but became a company with turnover.

The memberorganisations, such as our association, follow these developments closely and try to maintain a positive but critic position. We don't want to stop this process of modernisation but safeguard the interest of the members who form the base of the union. This is not always possible because the union busier with individual members and commercial activities then with the interest of its member organisations. The KWbN justifies her choices by pointing at the decline in the number of member organisations and the number of members of these organisations, whereas we states that member organisations get in a vulnerable position by dimishing support of the union. The

questions is whether the union is following the trend or is causing the trend.

Several years ago the KWbN decided to act as a facilitator instead of leader: bringing together initiatieives, parties and ideas inside the walkingsport. At the moment the union embraces the idea of 'thought leadership' and seems to operate as a leader again.

The members of our association don't experience much of this policy, but experience a number of developments:

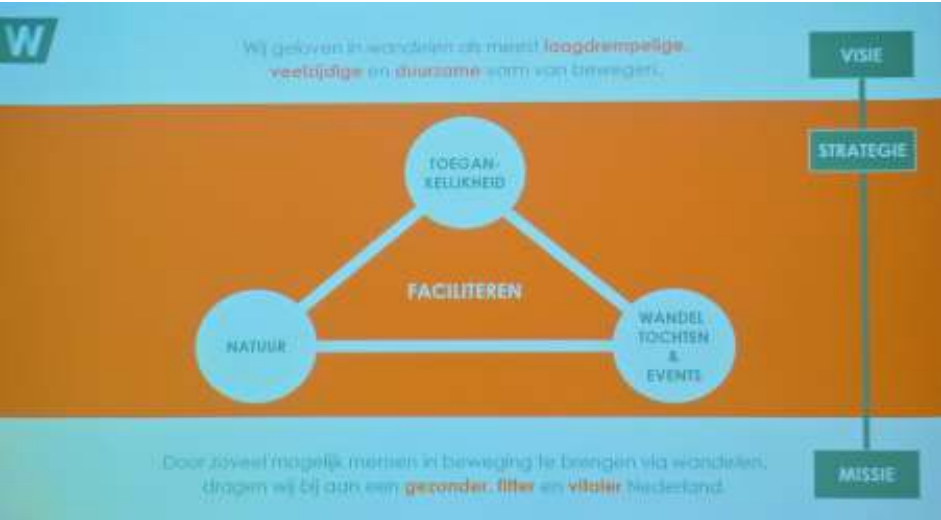
- The KWbN has built an on-line registration system for walking events and a generic calamity plan for organizations, but both are not widely accepted by the walkingclubs
- The types of membership have changed: they did let go the principle that a member of a walkingclub is also member of the KWbN and the reduction on fees for members of walkingclubs has been abolished. Furthermore, the KWbN is building a new system for member registration but that is a year behind schedule.
- The succes of national marketing around the evening four days is growing as is the popularity of platform wandel.nl The stichting DE4DAAGSE and the KWbN work together on a joined (financial) future: this should compensate for the loss of members.

The current director-manager, Paul Sanders, will be succeeded in 2024 by Gijs Janssen, who works already a long time for the KWbN. The office in Nijmegen has been reorganized where three young teamleaders manage the activities. In addition a new vision has been formulated:

Walking, and its healing effect, contributes to a healthier and happier life. We believe that:

- *Walkers needs nature and the nature needs walkers.*
- *Walkingtours and events are ideally suited to get people on the move in an accessible way and therefore could be organized without barriers*

We see this as a positive development because these views are explicitly looking after the interest of member organizations and walkers. If you have red the story above it does not always sound this way. We will follow, as the largest memberorganization, the developments within the KWbN and, if necessary, try to steer upon results through the members' council.



Flag Parade 2023

As usual, also this year our association was asked to bear the flags during the Flag Parade on Sunday afternoon before the Marches (Sunday, July 14). Are you interested in participating in this Flag Parade? Please register by sending an email to:

rino.hamelink@goudenkruisdragers.nl

Meetingpoints volunteer

Our member of honour Francie de Leeuw – de Bruijn used to allocate the meeting points but she wants to transfer this task. The job consists of pinpointing the locations, rental of tents and other facilities, arranging the requests for passes for the volunteers in the meeting points and pre-arranging the bites and drinks.

If you would like to assist with this please let us know. Members of the vicinity of Nijmegen of cause have the advantage that they live close to the locations of the meeting points, but other enthusiastic members are welcome. Up till now Francie did a great job arranging everything so the script is available and the contacts are already made so you will not have to reinvent the wheel. If you're interested: please contact the chairman at: voorzitter@goudenkruisdragers.nl



Reunion: Betuwse torentocht 2023

September 30, 2023

For the last “powered by” walk this year we are guest of the “Betuwse Torentocht” (Betuwe is an area between the great rivers Nederrijn, Waal and Maas, and Toren is tower).

The issue of this walk is to put together several walking routes into one route so the walker can determine him/herself how long the walk will be. Several towns like Buren, Erichem, Kapel Avezaath, Kerk Avezaath and Zoelen will spread walking-route suggestions. For members of the Gouden Kruisdragers association the startingpoint is the Saint-Lambertus church in Buren.

I am often using the highway in the direction of Tiel, but I never got the opportunity to see the landscape and environments outside the highway. In the early Saturdaymorning I am starting at the Saint Lambertus church in Buren and I choose to walk to Kerk Avezaath. I follow the route through the town of Buren and are impressed by the many 17th and 18th century houses. I walk along the “Marechaussee museum” (Marechaussee is amongst all the work they do like border patrol, military police and support of the regular police) and take a slope to the top of the dike, I am passing a windmill and have standing in an allotment garden a beautiful view of the skyline of the town of Buren. In the morning it still is quite chilly but the ground-mist gradually disappears and the walking weather is great. The route takes me across the fields in the direction of the apple orchards where the people are harvesting today. Relaxed I get to Kerk Avezaath and I can take my coffee break here in the church.

Just like at the start I'll get several route options and I choose the next route, this time to Zoelen. At this route we walk through a cherry orchard. You keep on walking through a very varying landscape. Walking through Zoelen I am returning to Buren very relaxed. Along the road I pass an estate and a large pumpkin field, such a great autumn picture. In a glance this walk is a very good mix of picturesque roads and places full of history. A real walk full of pleasures. Thanks to all the organizers of the tour and till next year

Monika Kleiböhmer



Summary General membership meeting July 17th 2023

On Monday July 17th the general membership meeting took place in the well known location of the Hotel van der Valk Lent/Nijmegen north.

The meeting was well attended (more than 100 visitors), traditionally the afternoon before the start of the 4-days marches, the speakers were Mr Sackers (Marchleader) and Habraken (representative of the KWbN (Dutch royal walking association)).

The marchleader was happy to be able to tell us that research had proven that the 4-days marches was not causing severe damage to the environment.

The walking platoon would not threaten the Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*) in its existence.

More important news was the announcement that there would be a safety car from this year on to safeguard the safety of the walkers.

What also should be mentioned is the test with the “Alinker” which would take place this year, the “Alinker” is a tool that makes it possible to take part in the 4-days marches with a physical disability. This year is a review if the apparatus can be regularly adapted and if the use will not hinder the other walkers. Mr. Sackers expresses his acceptations that this year it will be a full 4-days marches. Mr Habraken reports that the KWbN will pay more and more attention to the not-organized walkers, since more and more walking--clubs will not be able to cope with the ever rising regulatory burdens.

In the vision of the KWbN walking courses in which only the routes are described are the future. The association will pick up the function of keeper of data from the “walking consumer”.

The board makes an announcement about the contribution and organization, on request of the meeting the most substantive matters of the spring meeting are addressed. When there occurred votable issues these cases were addressed during the meeting.

There was attention drown to the newly opened “Gouden Kruisdragers Pad’ and the reunion in Buren to be held on September 30th.

After the joint singing of the “4-days song” there is time for an informal meeting and everyone will be ready for the 4-days marches 2023.



Invitation Membership Meeting

Saturday, April 13, 2024

We invite our members to our General Meeting on Saturday, April 13, 2024. The location of the meeting is D'Almarasweg 22b, 6525 DW in Nijmegen. The meeting will start at 14:00 and will last approximately one hour.

The board proposes the following agenda:

1. Opening by the chairman
2. Documents received and board announcements
3. Minutes of General Meeting July 17, 2023
4. Annual report of the board for 2023
 - a. Secretary's report
 - b. Report of the treasurer
5. Report of the finance committee
6. Appointment of finance committee 2024
7. Budget 2025 and determination of dues
8. Board election
9. (Other) Proposals of the board
10. Any other questions
11. Closing

Notes to Agenda:

Items 4 and 7: the documents associated with these agenda items will be available at a later date, but at least three weeks before the date of the meeting.

Item 6: Joke Poppe, Jose Honkoop and Dauphine Noordanus formed the finance committee in 2023, with Martin Pegels as reserve member. The board will share a proposal of the composition of the 2024 finance committee ahead of the meeting.

Item 7: The board proposes to maintain a membership fee of €12 in 2025, plus the contribution (if any) to the KWBN.

Item 8: Coert Peters and Ed Hendriks are retiring. Coert Peters is eligible for re-election for another term as board member. One board position is therefore vacant. The board expects to announce another candidate ahead of the meeting. Any member running for re-election must announce this candidacy in writing to the board at least 30 minutes before the start of the meeting, accompanied by at least ten signatures of voting members.

Item 9: In 2024, the association will designate at least two walks as 'powered by GKD' walk that our members can participate in for free and earn a stamp (to qualify for the bronze 'powered by GKD' pin with 5 stamps). The board proposes to host the reunion in 2024 at the same time as the second 'powered by GKD' walk in that year.

The board aims to end the meeting around 3 p.m.

Lustrum achieved

Congratulations to all!

Congratulations to all members who Four Days Marches lustrum! Eligible members who were present at the reunion in Buren received their rewards that day, the other rewards were send by mail to the ones who were not present. Did you not get a reward but should you have had one this year? Our apologies, please send us a mail and we will get you your reward and we will update our administration.

Did you know

... lustrum walkers in earlier times got teaspoons, ashtrays, candy dishes and even goblets?

... the lustrum rewards got replaced in 1984 by a pin for gentlemen and a pendant for the ladies?

... The highest lustrumreward ever to be rewarded was reward "70" for Mr Van der Lans?

... Ms Maas got a pin this year as a lustrum reward instead of a pendant? She got her 60th 4-days marches cross this year and of cause she got a lustrum reward for that too, but since she was the first woman within the Golden Cross Association the association did not have a "60" pendant, so she got a pin instead. We would like to congratulate Ms Maas with her achievement!

...lustrumrewards the members received are carefully packed by Francie de Leeuw and are taken from her house in mail-bags? She'll send them after the reunion because the lustrumwalkers present are rewarded personally by the chairmain. Francie puts a lot of time in it in advance of the reunion.

... in advance you can let us know that you are entitled to a lustrum reward? You can contact us af following address: www.goudenkruisdragers.nl/wp/lustrumbeloning



the lists we maintain are not always complete and in this way you are ensured to get your lustrum reward

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Johan Willemstein, Hetty Hilberts - Turkstra, Emmy Tres, Jur van de Westeringh, Paul van Deemen, Leendert Krielaart, Linda Verkerk, Hilly van der Heide, Wouter Hasselaar, Gerard Vlaardingerbroek, Joop Schaap, Fred Willems, Kees Braat, Lilian Verhoeven-Jansen, Johan de Jong, Wilja de Jong, Monique van Beest, Harma Waalkens-Timpener, Klaas Kirchhoff, Teunina de Keijzer, René van Blokland, Toin van Swieten-Beekwilder, Jan Jansen, Anna-Marie Jaspers, Ton de Jong, Gerrit den Ambtman, Michael Kors, Thea den Cordia-Toom den, Kees de Ruiter, Nic van Leeuwen, Nico Koppers, Benny Caspers, John Dallinga, Gerardus Theunisse, Othilde Siersema, Willemijn van Offeren-de Louwere, Ina Verheul, Thomas de Groot, Ineke van den Besselaar, Alex van den Berkmortel, Karin van der Burgh-Postma, Carla van de Loo-van Reede, Jac Feijen, Gerrit Lindenholz, Monique Barendsen-Schut, Dirk Noorlander, Tonny Aarts-Bakkeren, Hans Aarts, Lenie Kampman-de Galan, Klaas Havenaar, Paul van de Burgt, Mira Peeters-Bijlsma, Henny Muis, Erik Jansen, Rinse Froma, Jan Hoek, Kevin Hendriks, Josien Verstegen-van Es, Nanny Ramp, Sjaak Voogt, Pierre Vermeeren, Cobie Ockers, Ada Westerling Vleesch-Dubois, Theo Schadé, Charlotte Belder, Hennie Steenhagen, Frits Huisman, Wil Rosenhart, Olivia Wardenaar, Erik Becking, Danny Kesteloo, Nijs van Loon, Rene Verhoeven, Bertus Swaager, Gosse Bosch-Wielenga, Mignonne Brouns, Wim ter Beek, Erik van der Voorden, Ilse van de Laak-van de Hei, Reinier Katerberg, Pieter Jansen, Herman Rozing, Rick Martens, Anne Uiterwijk, Wolfgang Lorenz, Paula Kersmakers, Wim van Mierlo, Suzanne Albers, Elles van Grinsven - Laurensen, Henny van Oostende, Jan Spee, Frank Beyersdorf, Uwe Gerhard Bruckner, Achim Seepold, Lahcen Elgouille, Huub van Gastel, Lizet Geerts, Johan van Hees, Edgar ten Hoor, Wim ten Hoven, Hannie Maassen, Lisette Melisse, Jan Nellestijn, Herman Schimmel, Johan Stuivenberg, André Visser, Ben van Beuningen, Marieke van de Meulengraaf, Mart Jordaen, Gerard Willems, Henk van Winzum, Manuela - Manegold, Mahelia Prins, Gerard van Buren, Henk Neijenhuis, Frieda Groot-Duller, Rene van Barneveld, Mieke Brouwer, Philippe Rouge, Gerda Muskens, Nel Abels-Pastijn, Peter Ormel, Wies Siebers, Elly Damhuis-Oonk, Ferdie Wissink, Edwin ter Haar, Rick - Damhuis, A. Polman - Bouhuijzen, Marleen van de Wetering, Jose Massar, Cees Vedder.

20x

Hans Rommelse, Evert Beekmans, Hester van Seville, Jos van Uden, Patricia Boosten, Elly de Rijcke, Otoo Broksma, Jelte van de Zee, An van Geffen-Broeren, Inge Snoep-Vliegenthart, Josken Andriessen, Martin Kelder, Bep Agricola-van der Made, Klaas Korthoef, Ans Zonneveld-Stuifbergen, Wim Lehmler, R.E.J. Janssen, Gerard Linthorst, Bert Koedood, Dave Winowatan, Ria Sonneveldt-Brouwer, Adriaan van den Dool, Marco van Heel, Ad Dooser, Raymond van Peer, Ivo ten Broeke, Juul Lenselink, Henk Romijn, Cees van den Ouweland, Maurice Wijnhoven, Andre Engelaar, Geziena Mellens, Co Hessing, Adriaan Verburg, Koos van der Vlucht, Fred van den Boom, Aart van Alfen, Rene Beukema, Gerrie Peters, Karin Rasing-Glezer, Kees van der Vlucht, Chris Janssen, Annie Reijnen.

25x

E.P. Geerts, Ed Hendriks, Arnold van den Berg, Swie Tjiang Tan, Annemieke Martinus-Claus, Jan de la Bruheze, John Peters, Paul O' Sullivan, B.J.T. Putman, G. Nijburg-Datema, A.P. Koster Koster, Wim van Lenthe, Maud Dodemont, Bernard Vermeulen, J.H.R. Koppelman, J.A.M. Berendse, Lex Levisson, Cor van der Gaag, John Brouns, Robert Mittemeijer, Coolwijk van de-Bogers, Bep Beekwilder.

30x

Jan van Doggenaar, Reint Huizinga, Jan Wingelaar, C.J. Mettes, Jan Wouters, W.D.I. Hendrickx, Berend de Jonge, Ferdinand van Keeken, Jan van Heck, Ria van Stokkum-Koolen, Henk van Haren, Bernhard Paetzke, Marinda Wagtmans, Loet van Eldik, Adri Elsen, Karen Nabuurs, Esther Ohello, Herke van den Berg, Ronald van der Schot, Andrea de Rouw, Mari Smits, René van Helmond.

35x

Jan van den Berg, Theo Houterman, Ton Mes.

40x

Alex van Driel, P.B.M. Anemaat - Segeren, D.W. Floor, Jos Peters, Eric de Clippelaar, Jos Le Coq, Leonard Allan Goldsmith, Saskia Gorris-Loeffen, Gustaaf Groenen.

45x

Arie Klootwijk, Willem van der Helm.

50x

Arnold Schakel, Hans Standaard, Z.V. van der Spil, Daan den Hartog.

60x

J.B.A.M. Olthof, Ineke Maas.



'Powered-by GKD' 2024

March 24th in Burgum & September 29th in Gulpen

Although our association does not organize walks itself, it 'adopts' a number of walks throughout the country each year. In this way we try to support the organizing association by drawing extra attention to this walk. It gives us as an association the opportunity to do some branding and it has the nice bonus for our members to be able to meet each other outside the third week of July.

A few years ago we also created a stamp card that can be stamped at these walk. After collecting 5 stamps, you get a pin from our association.

Participation in the Powered-by walks is paid for by the association for our members after registration by mail.

For coming year, our association put two 'Powered-by' marches on the calendar:

24 March - Pingo walk - 10, 25, 40 and 60 km - Burgum - wsv FLAL

29 September - Castle walk - 7, 12, 18, 24 and 30 km Gulpen - wsv De Veldlopers

Pingo walk

The first Powered-by walk of 2024 is the Pingo walk. It will take place in Burgum, in the heart of Friesland and the main town of the municipality of Tietjerksteradeel.

Burgum is a regional village that originated in the Middle Ages with several nuclei near the Sint- Nicolaasklooster or Barraconvent (monastery) founded in the late 12th century. Burgum was very well accessible by water: near the Bergumermeer to which the Kolonelsdiep connected to the east and the Wijde Ee with the Langemeer and the Lang Deel to the west.

A pingo is a spherical mound created in an area of permafrost where the expansion of frozen/freezing groundwater (hydrostatic pressure) lifts a layer of frozen soil. Cracking of the upper layer exposes the ice layer to the sun and then a crater or lake can form. As the climate warms, such as at the end of an ice age, what remains of a pingo is a circular lake or crater called a pingoruin. Many pingo ruins are slowly filled in with peat after the ice melts. This filling up can take many thousands of years.

A description of the hike will be posted on the website soon.

There is a choice of 10, 25, 40 and 60 km distances for this walk.

You can sign up for the Powered-by walks (up to one week before the walk) by sending an email to: rino.hamelink@goudenkruisdragers.nl.

Clearly mention your name, address and your KWbN membership number (if applicable).



Reunion: Save the date!!

Sunday 29th September 2024

The reunion will be organized this year in combination with a Powered-by walk again.

The walk that has been chosen is organized on Sunday, so the reunion will be organized on Sunday as well. The walk and reunion will take place on Sunday 29th September 2024 in Gulpen.

At the moment of the writing of this article the composing of the final programme is in progress (at the moment of publication of this magazine it is probably available at the website); at least a visit to the 'millions' line will be made. This is a railway line in Zuid-Limburg, that took some millions to build at the time.

De construction of the original Millionsline was started in 1925. Mining in the area threatens its existence by continuous descents. A lot of soil was moved to minimize the differences in height in the hilly area. Where the railway embankment was raised by 32 meters in the valley of the Anselerbeek in Kerkade, the railway was lowered 18 meters below ground level between Kerkrade and Simpelveld (to minimize the ascent and descent of the railway line).

Keep an eye on the website!



The Gold Medallists' Trail

The Gold Medallists' Trail

Behind the scenes, a lot of work has been done over the past few years to create the Gold Medallists' Trail, which was handed to Marches leader Henny Sackers on 8 July on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Association of Gold Medallists of the 4Day Marches and the 105th edition of the Marches. The guidebook of the route was sent to our members as a present and at the same time, the route was online in the Storytrails app. For the new members who put down their names after the 4Day Marches as well as for anyone interested, the guidebooks are also for sale via the website www.gouden-kruisdragers.nl, at the Citystore and at bookshop Dekker van de Vegt in the centre of Nijmegen. They will also be for sale during meetings throughout the year and at the meeting points of Gold Medallists during the 4Day Marches. There is a QR code in the guide to obtain access to the Storytrails app. Many people have already walked the Gold Medallists' Trail, one of whom was Annemieke Martinus Claus. She shares her report.



24-09-2023

At around 9 o'clock I left the Shamrock on the Smetiusstraat (close to Nijmegen train station) for the start of the first part, the shortened route, together with two friends. Two of us were people from Nijmegen and during this walk we got to the most beautiful spots in Nijmegen where we had never been. For the first part, we had to follow the directions carefully, which were quite clear and easy to read. After finishing this part we started on Leg 1 and Leg 2. Here, we were able to walk longer stretches without consulting the guide every now and again. Very pleasant. So, first the busier and then the quieter part of Nijmegen. We also visited an exposition, which was a bonus. Around noon we had walked about 15 kms, which we thought was enough for the day. In the Hezelstraat we looked back on this special day with a nice cup of coffee (in glorious sunshine). We have already fixed a date to finish Legs 3 up to 9. I would like to compliment our association on plotting this walk.

Thank you very much.

A most satisfied Gold Medallist,
Annemieke Martinus-Claus.



In Memoriam

- F.J. Nijhoff
- W. Evers
- A. Hinstman
- F. Oorsprong
- J. Wallert
- P.J.J. Vervoort
- A.T. Klaver-Roozendaal

- Middelburg
- Huissen
- Assen
- Rijsbergen
- Leusden
- Siebangewald
- Warmenhuizen



Portrait of two Gold Medallists

Interview with father and son: Swie Tjiang Tan (age 67) and Yu Kai Tan (age 29).

"The 4Days Marches has enriched my life!", Swie Tjiang enthusiastically recounts his experiences with the 4Days Marches. During his first edition in 1986, he walked with one friend, Pieter. In the years that followed, he got many others to walk with. For example, his entire family owns a 4Days Marches Cross. With his wife Ida he walked the 40 km in 1993 with which Ida earned her cross. He himself then received a diploma for not walking his regular distance. His daughter Li Sha participated, through her rowing club Njord, and walked the 4Days Marches from Heumensoord in 2019 with the Leiden Student Defense Force in her student days. Swie Tjiang received his 25th cross this year. He also infected his son Kai with the 4Days Marches virus, he has now successfully participated 14 times. Kai also inspires his friends to start walking. The apple never falls far from the tree. Jaimy Pieterse

How it all started

When Swie Tjiang was in primary school, he loved watching the Nijmegen 4Days Marches entry that was broadcast live on television. He remembers the festive entrances with lots of spectators on the side and found it incredible that people could walk 55 km a day for 4 days; a real achievement. It was not without reason that participants were rewarded for this with a medal for demonstrated marching skill. Thus the seed for the 4Days Marches was planted. From secondary school, he wanted to take on this challenge himself but his friends were not so enthusiastic. After all, Eindhoven is quite a distance away from Nijmegen and the 4Days Marches was therefore unknown. The desire to participate was thus forcibly parked.

In 1975, Swie Tjiang went to study in Leiden. During the many cosy evenings at the society with friends, he regularly enquired. He often got enthusiastic pledges but only after quite some drinks. Unfortunately, they would then back out the next morning when they were sober again. Until 1986. Swie Tjiang was in a group of friends formed at their student union LVVS Augustinus. Almost all had been members of the society committee and/or members of the indoor football team Het Binnenhof in the years 1975 to 1978, sponsored by the then daily newspaper. "In early 1986, about 10 of us went out in The Hague," explains Swie Tjiang. "After a very enjoyable evening/night, we stayed at a friend's house. At breakfast, I then asked again who felt like walking the 4Days Marches with me. Pieter immediately agreed, he thought it would be fun.



Sjef said he did want to participate but he wanted to parachute jump. "So if you go skydiving with me, I will walk the 4Days Marches with you". Evert made a similar deal, as he wanted to cycle the Amstel Gold Race. The four of us agreed that everyone would organize their own activity." In the end, only Pieter and Swie Tjiang walked their first 4Days Marches in 1986. Swie Tjiang continues "we knew nothing about the 4Days Marches. There was no internet yet and we didn't know anyone who had participated before. Using the booklet 'know your sport - walking', we prepared for the 50 km. After about 200 km of training, we boarded the train to Nijmegen. Our sleeping address, arranged through the VVV, was almost 2 km from the Vereeniging where the start and finish were then. It became a very hot

4Days Marches where, to our surprise, the route on the day of Wijchen was not 50 km but no less than 55 km. Also, on Friday at the Scheidingsweg after 50 km, we got the last control snap and were already being congratulated. The 5 km entry was optional so we were allowed to take the bus to the Vereeniging if necessary. So in 1986 you walked 210 km and of course we walked the entry."



How it did not stop after participating once

In 1987, Sjef and Evert walked along for their first 4Days Marches. A rainy 4Days Marches where everyone really suffered. The 4Days Marches was completed on character. Nevertheless, everyone enjoyed walking together. Hard work but also a lot of fun and good conversations so that they also participated in 1988. In 1989, they were also supposed to participate with seven men but it became "the year of betrayal", says Swie Tjiang mockingly with a serious undertone. He explained that on the Monday before the 4Days Marches, Evert let it be known via a note that he would not participate. He had joined the KNBLO board, under which the 4Days Marches then fell, without telling his friends. So Evert could not walk along because of his board obligations. Everyone was united and clear: "He dropped us, his friends, to become BoBo (BondsBons) (a hotshot)," says Swie Tjiang. "Of course, we ran into him daily at the Vereeniging and he had to pay for it by frequently arranging beer for us. But it all worked out well again though, within the group of friends people still make vicious jokes about his betrayal."

Since Evert would not be walking in the coming years due to him being a BoBo, they decided that everyone should decide for themselves if they were still going to participate. However, Sjef, Pieter, Evert and Swie Tjiang did agree to walk the 4Days Marches together again in the year they turn 60. Later it turned out that this coincided exactly with the 100th edition of the marches. You couldn't just take part in that 4Days Marches. Kai, Sjef, Evert and Swie Tjiang had qualified for the 100th and therefore did not have to take part in the draw. Pieter (4 crosses), Sjef's son Emiel (2 crosses) and Emiel's friend Lex (1 cross) did have to draw lots. Swie Tjiang set out to find a sleeping address for 4 to a maximum of 7 men. They succeeded and it has been their regular sleeping address ever since. In the end, everyone was drawn which made for a very special year. Everyone did start at their own distance. Sjef, Emiel, Lex, Kai and Swie Tjiang



Group photo from 2018, Kai and Sjef achieved their gold cross.

even did the 55 km that year. So this is how the four friends fulfilled their 1989 agreement. What made it extra special is that while making that appointment, they never imagined that their children would also walk with them. Incidentally, in 2016, the friends celebrated not only that they all turned 60 but also the 40th anniversary of the indoor football team Het Binnenhof and 30 years of participation in the 4Days Marches.

Like father like son, walking connects

So after 1989, the friends went their separate ways. Swie Tjiang and Ida like to walk together and often but no longer distances of 30/40 km. For example, they hope to walk the Camino Santiago de Compostella, Finisterra and Muxia together next year.

Every year, Kai went with his sister and mother to watch the last day in Cuijk. When Kai was 9 years old, he walked the last 17 km of the final day for the first time. The enthusiasm of the crowd on the Via Gladiola made a big impression. "I knew they weren't clapping for me, I wasn't running, but I did think that later I wanted to walk the 4Days Marches myself" says Kai. Determined, they then started training so that Kai could participate in 2006, the year he turned 12. Unfortunately, that coincided exactly with an important period in the completion phase of his primary schooling. Children in Nijmegen are

free during the 4Days Marches, but Kai was at school in Leiden. Kai entered the 30 km for the first time in 2007. He walked with a friend, Jeroen, who walked very easily and came in whistling all 4 days. Swie Tjiang spent the years when Kai walked 30 km, walking the 40 km himself so that he could support his son and Jeroen on the final kilometers. After walking 2x with Jeroen, Kai walked 2x the 40km with his father before switching to the 50km. "I've always said that I'm going for the 11th time anyway and after that I'll see what happens. Meanwhile, I'm at 14 crosses and I'm still excited to continue like this." says Kai.

Kai has also really become part of the group of friends. You get to know each other in a special way while walking. Swie Tjiang confirms that: "Along the way and during training sessions, we like to make fond memories. Special, intense conversations are had while walking (and suffering) and that makes the friendship closer. My friends see Kai not as "the son of" but as one of us. Consequently, Kai has heard (almost) all the stories from my



The entire Tan family.

student days. Just before the 4Days Marches this year, our dear friend Sjef passed away totally unexpected. Reason we didn't really celebrate my 25th cross. In these moments too, it becomes clear again how strong and important these friendships are."

The 4Days Marches as an achievement

Swie Tjiang and Kai both walk easily by nature, with relatively little training. Incidentally, Swie Tjiang has been on a training schedule since Evert's 2014 4Days Marches. It was Evert's first 4Days Marches since 1988 and he suffered tremendously. Hence, Swie Tjiang has since been making a fortnightly training schedule for Pieter and Evert who both live near Leiden. After each training session, everyone is all caught up again and ends with a pleasant drink. This way, they walk the 4Days Marches trained and thus with more fun. Kai tries to walk 50 kilometers at least once, just to see how that feels. Preferably with someone together of course, that's a lot easier. "A few years ago, I was sitting in the pub with friends and enquired that I wanted to walk 50 km and was looking for a walking buddy. Everyone declared me crazy. At that point, they were hungry and we went to MacDonald's. A friend then jokingly said that he would like to walk with me if that 50 km route would pass by several MacDonald's locations. So I plotted a 50km route along 4 MacDonald's branches to our regular pub, the McRoute. 11 people then started to join me during my training. For them it's the challenge of the year, for me it's training for the 4Days Marches. And we have been doing that every year since then around two months before the 4Days Marches. In recent years, several friends have also walked the 4Days Marches.

Swie Tjiang also walks outside Nijmegen. "I walked my first Camino from Leiden to Santiago de Compostella late last year. That's about 2,500 kilometers. That took me over 2.5 months. I walked alone and was thus able to walk at my own pace. In mid-October I returned from my second

Camino but this time as a buddy of visually impaired walkers. Then you are their eyes when walking over difficult roads and dangerous parts, signposting, telling them what to see but also historical facts etc. You are really paired with one of the walkers for 24 hours every day to assist them. It is outside your comfort zone: you lead the hiker along the easiest, safest road, leading yourself over the bad road section but also when going to the toilet and when eating. You adjust your pace to that of the walker. It was a fantastic experience to make it possible for visually impaired walkers to also walk the Camino."

With the lustrum pin '25' in his pocket, it doesn't stop there for Swie Tjiang. This year, his wife Ida gave him a special shirt and garlands with twenty-five on it. This way, they still dwelled on the lustrum despite it being fraught for him and friends due to the loss of their friend Sjef who, by the way, achieved 11 crosses.

Difference from the past

For Swie Tjiang, the big difference with the past is that apart from the crowds, the 4Days Marches was originally a real achievement march and now less so. "It now seems to be more about partying than achievement for demonstrated marching skill," says Swie Tjiang. "The current distances combined with gender and age, have been unchanged since 1967. In 1967, the fitness of a man or woman aged 50 to 60 was not comparable to the fitness of a man or woman of the same age now. There used to be almost no women at the 50 km, this year about 20%. Many people wait to register for the first time until they have reached the age when they "only" have to walk 40 or 30 km. Moreover, on the 40 and 30 km they are allowed to start earlier, which means they have longer time for their distance. Even military personnel are now allowed to individually walk the civilian distance of 40 km with 10 kilos of gear. Surely this is much easier than walking in platoons from Heumensoord with at least 10 kilos of gear." Swie Tjiang wants to deliver an achievement for himself to earn

his cross. For instance, he still walks the 50 km because the 30 and 40 km come relatively easy to him. He shares his idea of adapting the distances to the current times in order to require the same achievement for the cross as before. "There may also be a choice, given that due to the organizational costs a large field of participants is necessary, to drop the royal decrees for demonstrated marching skill (signed in the early 20th century) so that there is an "ordinary" 4Days Marches."

Next year, Swie Tjiang and Kai will definitely be back at de Vereeniging in Nijmegen. That has been their regular meeting place since 1986 and that is where they end every day. The 4Days Marches has played an important role in the bond between this father and son. Their friendships have also grown deeper and more intense, partly due to walking the 4Days Marches, thus enriching them. "It really is quality time to spend a whole week in Nijmegen together with your son (but also with your friends)." Says Swie Tjiang. The wish is that many great memories and stories will be added to this.



Kai and Swie Tjiang at the Vereeniging.

The most beautiful thing this year; from joke to hit - Kees Brinkman

A joke that got out of hand, that is the way Major Bruls called the realization of the song "De mooiste van het jaar". It was initiated by Wilco van Schaik, general director of N.E.C. (The Nijmegen soccer club). He wanted to express his love for Nijmegen and that is why it came to a 4-Days song. The text is written by Leo Driessen and Jantien van Driel. The song consists of 4 couplets for every day of the 4-Days Marches.

Day one and chorus:

Echte lopers stappen niet
Real walkers do not go out to drink
en echte stappers lopen niet,
and real drinkers don't go out to walk
maar wij lopen door dag en nacht
but we walk thru day an night
en zingen dit Vierdaagslied.
And sing this 4-Days song

It's a tribute to the 4-Days Marches, the 4-Days festivities and the city of Nijmegen.

It is performed by a singing an swinging quartet with the name "The Walking-band Brothers and Sister".

It consists next to Wilco van Schaik and Major Bruls of the Nijmegen top model Janneke Scherpenhuijzen and the Nijmegen shopkeeper Marcel Boekhoorn. They are no singers but proud of their city and the 4-Days Marches.

Monday July 19th there was a one time live performance, which was sung with a lot of enthusiasm and the chorus was sung by all present at the Faber square.



Scan this QR code to open the YouTube link!

The most beautiful of the year

It's Blue Tuesday, I lace up my shoestrings firmly

I lace them up firmly because we'll be walking today

Crossing the Waalbridge thru the beautiful blue Elst city

Across the Betuwe landscape along Oosterhout and Lent

And in the afternoon, I'll be drinking a beer at the square

I drink a beer and do not feel any pain at all

This is the most beautiful that's really clear

It's clear this is the most beautiful of the year.

Corus:

Real walkers do not go out to drink
and real drinkers don't go out to walk
but we walk thru day an' night
And sing this 4-days song

Pink Wednesday, I put on my pink boots
My pink boots and I am going out for an early walk

Along the marshes and the land of Maas and Waal

And the cheering's great in Wijchen

And at the end (at the end), at the end of the day

I'll kiss the rainbow and toss up my glass
This is the most beautiful that's really clear

It's clear this is the most beautiful of the year

Chorus

Da da da (da da da)

Da da da (da da da)

Da da da dun diddle un diddle un diddle
uh da da

Da da da (da da da)

Da da da (da da da)

Da da da dun diddle un diddle un diddle
uh da da

The day of Groesbeek, I straighten my back, it's already day three

Straighten my back, there are seven hills ahead

Along the water, I admire the river

Thru' Berg en Dal, oh how I love the view here

And in the afternoon (in the afternoon)
I'll drink a beer it's a feast

I drink a beer, I haven't ever been so proud

This is the most beautiful that's really clear

It's clear this is the most beautiful of the year

Chorus

There it is the fourth day, in my hand a gladiolus

A gladiolus, that's the way I keep on going year after year

And the pontoonbridge will bring me across the Mas

Along the way people are cheering all the way

The people cheer (cheer really hard) I think of the cross and keep on going

To the finish, and I'll put all my effort in it
This is the most beautiful (really the most beautiful), and we are almost done now

Almost done, this is the most beautiful of the year



From left to right: Wilco van Schaik, Marcel Boekhoorn, Janneke Scherpenhuijzen en Major of Nijmegen Hubert Bruls.